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City kicks in another $100,000 for BRAC

Money to be used for recruitment, relocation efforts

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The Tennessee Valley BRAC Committee got a $100,000 boost Monday, courtesy of the City of Huntsville.

Mayor Loretta Spencer presented the ceremonial check to Huntsville lawyer Joe Ritch, co-chair of the committee. It was formed in 2002 to protect Redstone Arsenal from losing military work and jobs that might be sent to other bases, and to lure more work to Huntsville.
Ritch said the committee has spent about $700,000.

"That was in line with our estimates," he said, adding that the committee will use the $100,000 to help in relocation and job recruitment efforts.

The city earlier contributed $250,000 to the local BRAC effort.

The national Base Realignment and Closure Commission on Wednesday will begin four days of deliberations over the Pentagon's proposed changes to military and civilian work.

In May, the Pentagon asked the president's BRAC panel to move Missile Defense Agency, or MDA, research and management jobs to Huntsville. It was part of an overall recommendation that would move anywhere from 2,000 to 5,000 jobs to North Alabama, depending on the number of contractors who follow the government work.

The Pentagon has recommended that the headquarters of the Army Materiel Command and the Space & Missile Defense Command move to Redstone, along with the bulk of MDA's work. All of those commands are based near Washington, D.C., where high rent and questionable security pose problems for the Pentagon.

Ritch said Redstone was put in a favorable position over the years by city, state and federal efforts in improving roads, water and sewer lines and building homes for commanding officers.
"BRAC didn't start two years ago," Ritch said. "It started several years ago."

The national BRAC panel must report to President Bush by Sept. 8.

Bush can send the recommendations back before sending them to Congress, or he can accept the entire plan.